

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 5, 39 and 52. Please add new claims 59-69. Please cancel claim 30 without prejudice. Pending claims 1-29 and 31-69 follow.

1. (Currently Amended) A cooking apparatus for preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:

a microwaveable housing,

a grill surface supporting the food item thereon; and

an ingredient for application to the food item, wherein the ingredient is not extracted from the food item,

said grill surface, said ingredient, and the food item being contained within said microwaveable housing for heating in the microwave oven, said ingredient being positioned below said grill surface so that steam from heating said ingredient is applied to the food item.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, an interior surface of said microwaveable housing including a support member, said grill surface being placed on said support member.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, said microwaveable housing including a vent through which steam is released.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, said grill surface being coated with a metalized susceptor material.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, said ingredient comprising a gelatinous ingredient.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said ingredient including a flavoring for the food item.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a charcoal flavoring.
8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a beef flavoring.
9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a barbecue flavoring.
10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, the flavoring comprising a lemon flavoring.
11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said ingredient including an aroma for the food item.
12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, steam from heating said ingredient including a coloring for the food item.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, the coloring comprising a caramel coloring.
14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, the apertures defined by said grill surface being positioned so that a liquid from said heated food item passes through the apertures to a bottom section of said microwaveable housing.
15. (Original) A microwave cooking apparatus for preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:
 - a microwaveable housing having a lower housing section and an upper housing section;
 - a support member in said lower housing section;
 - a grill surface for supporting the food item thereon, said grill surface defining a plurality of apertures and being placed on said support member; and
 - a gelatinous ingredient,
said gelatinous ingredient being located in said lower housing section and below said grill surface so that steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient is applied to the food item through the apertures of said grill surface.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a connector that couples said lower and upper microwave housing sections together.
17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16, said connector comprising a flexible connector.
18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said support members comprising a ridge extending from an interior surface of said lower housing section, said grilling surface being placed on said ridge.
19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said support members comprising a plurality of base members extending up from an interior bottom surface of said lower housing section.
20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said upper housing section defining a vent aperture through which steam is released.
21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a vent attached to a top surface of said upper housing section, said vent defining one or more vent apertures through which steam can be released.
22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, said vent being adjustable.
23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, liquid from the heated food item passing down through the plurality apertures and into said lower housing section.
24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said grill surface being coated with a susceptor material.
25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 24, said susceptor material comprising a metalized susceptor material.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 24, said susceptor material being selected so that said grilling surface reaches a sufficiently high temperature and marks the food item with a pattern of said grill surface.
27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from said gelatinous ingredient being applied to a bottom surface of the food item.
28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from said gelatinous ingredient being diffused onto to the food item.
29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned in a reservoir formed in said lower housing section.
30. (Canceled).
31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a flavoring for the food item.
32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a charcoal flavoring.
33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a beef flavoring.
34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a barbecue flavoring.
35. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, the flavoring comprising a lemon flavoring.
36. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, steam from heating said gelatinous sauce including an aroma for the food item.

37. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, steam from heating said gelatinous ingredient including a coloring for the food item.

38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, the coloring comprising a caramel coloring.

39. (Currently Amended) A packaged food product for heating in a microwave oven, comprising:

a microwaveable housing having a lower housing section and an upper housing section;

a support member located in said lower housing section;

a food item;

a grill surface defining a plurality grill apertures and supporting said food item thereon, said grill surface being placed on said one or more support members; and

a gelatinous ingredient for said food item,

said gelatinous ingredient being located in said lower housing section and below said grill surface,

said microwaveable housing including said food item, said grill surface, said gelatinous ingredient, said support member, and a said vent, said gelatinous ingredient being heated in the microwave oven so that steam from said heated gelatinous ingredient rises through the plurality of apertures of said grill surface and onto said heated food item.

40. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said support member comprising a ridge extending from an interior surface of said lower housing section.

41. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said support member comprising a plurality of base members extending up from an interior bottom surface of said lower housing section.

42. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising a vent in one of the housing sections, said vent defining an aperture, wherein the steam is released through the vent aperture.

43. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 42, said upper housing including said vent comprising a vent defined by said upper housing section.

44. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 42, said vent being attached to a top surface of said top housing section.

45. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, wherein liquid from heating said food item drips down through the plurality of apertures defined by said grill surface and into said lower housing section.

46. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said grill surface being coated with a metalized susceptor material.

47. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said gelatinous ingredient being positioned in a reservoir in a bottom of said lower housing section.

48. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising an inert gas, said inert gas being added into said microwaveable housing, and said microwaveable housing being sealed with said food item, said gelatinous ingredient, said grill surface, and said inert gas therein.

49. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said microwaveable housing being sealed and evacuated of air.

50. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, said food item being beef, chicken, pork or a vegetable.

51. (Original) The packaged food product of claim 39, further comprising a connector that couples said lower and upper microwave housing sections together.

52. (Currently Amended) The packaged food product ~~produce~~ of claim 50, said connector comprising a flexible connector.

53. (Original) A method of preparing a food item in a microwave oven, comprising:
providing a microwaveable housing, a grill surface defining grill apertures, a food item, and a gelatinous ingredient for the food item, the grill surface, the gelatinous ingredient, and the food item being contained within the microwaveable housing; and
arranging the food item on the grill surface so that the gelatinous ingredient is positioned in a reservoir of the microwaveable housing below the grill surface; and
heating the microwaveable housing, the grill surface, the food item, and the gelatinous ingredient with the microwave oven so that steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient rises through the grill apertures and onto the food item.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53, further comprising releasing steam in the microwaveable housing through a vent defined in a top surface of the microwaveable housing.

55. (Original) The method of claim 53, further comprising, before heating, applying a metalized susceptor layer to the grill surface so that when the grill surface is sufficiently heated, the food item is marked with a pattern of the heated grill surface.

56. (Original) The method of claim 53, steam from the heated gelatinous ingredient including a flavoring for the food item.

57. (Original) The method of claim 53, steam from the gelatinous ingredient including a scent or an aroma for the food item.

58. (Original) The method of claim 53, steam from the gelatinous ingredient including a coloring for the food item.

59. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, the ingredient having a defined shape.
60. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, the gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
61. (New) The packaged food product of claim 39, the gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
62. (New) The method of claim 53, providing the gelatinous ingredient comprising providing a gelatinous ingredient having a defined shape.
63. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the gelatinous ingredient is not extracted from the food item.
64. (New) The packaged food product of claim 39, wherein the gelatinous ingredient is not extracted from the food item.
65. (New) The method of claim 53, providing a gelatinous ingredient for the food item comprising providing a gelatinous ingredient that is not extracted from the food item.
66. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, said ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the microwave housing.
67. (New) The apparatus of claim 3, 9 the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the lower housing section.
68. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the lower housing section.
69. (New) The method of claim 53, the gelatinous ingredient being positioned on a bottom surface of the microwaveable housing.